



# Hawaii & Pacific Basin NEWSLETTER

May 2013



Your Farm Service Agency Online Monthly Newsletter Covering the Latest Topics

## In this Issue:

### Page 1:

2013 FSA County  
Committee Elections

### Page 2:

Online Data Tool for Public  
Acreage Certification

### Page 3:

CRP Signup Starts May 20  
Conservation Compliance

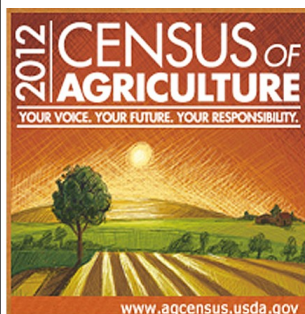
### Page 4:

Farm Loan Programs  
• Guaranteed Loans  
• Rural Youth Loans  
• Beginning and Limited  
Resource Farmers

Little Red Hen is a Big Hit  
with 5th Graders

### Page 5:

Census of Agriculture  
Dates to Remember  
Farm Loans Interest Rates



## 2013 FSA County Committee Elections

The election of  
agricultural producers  
to the Farm Service

Agency (FSA) county committee is important to all farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long established, large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County Committee (COC) members are a critical component of FSA operations. The intent is to have the COC reflect the makeup of the producers and represent all constituents. This means wherever possible, minorities, women or lower income producers need to be on the committee to speak for these underrepresented groups.

County committees provide input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

Farm Service Agency county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws, and members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

## Election Period

- June 17, 2013 - Nomination period begins.
- August 1, 2013 - This is the last day to file nomination forms (FSA-669A) at the local USDA Service Center.
- November 4, 2013 - Ballots are mailed to eligible voters.
- December 2, 2013 - Last day to return ballots to the USDA Service Center.
- January 1, 2014 - Newly elected county committee members take office.

## Who Can Hold Office

To hold office as a county committee member, a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria:

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA;
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election; and
- Reside in the local administrative area (LAA) in which the person is a candidate.

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee; or
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony; or
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

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Basin Farm Service  
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The Kona Office is closed  
until further notice. Please  
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**Hours**

Monday—Friday  
8:00 am—4:00 pm

**Website**

[www.fsa.usda.gov/hi](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/hi)

## Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/sa0669a\\_commiteelectform.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/sa0669a_commiteelectform.pdf)

Nomination forms for the 2013 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on August 1, 2013.

Agricultural producers who participate or cooperate in an FSA program may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee. Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

## Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm also may be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election – Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a County Committee Member." Producers may contact their local USDA Service Center for more information.

## Online Data Tool for Public

The USDA Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Program Statistics query tool, known as REGStats, is the official new tool of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for making program application and participation rate data available to the public on the Internet.

The REGStats website provides summary information about the number of

individuals and entities that apply for, and receive, federal assistance from four USDA agencies or mission areas – the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The information available in REGStats includes the number of applicants and recipients, by fiscal year, for USDA programs available to agricultural producers and landowners, categorized by race, ethnicity, and gender. Summary totals may be obtained nationally, or by state and county for the 50 states, as well as the U.S. territories.

Visit the online site:

<http://www.regstats.usda.gov>

## Acreage Certification

After planting, producers should certify their acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. Acreage reports are due in the county office according to the following dates:

- March 15 - Coffee
- May 31 – Nursery
- July 15 – Banana, Papaya
- September 30 – Aquaculture, Floriculture, Turfgrass Sod, Mushrooms, Ginseng
- December 15 – Grazed Forage
- January 2 - Honey

March 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for acreage reports to be submitted to your local FSA county office for all other crops.



## CRP/CREP Sign-Up

Farm Service Agency (FSA) will conduct a four week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. Applications for the continuous CRP sign-up of the Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will be accepted beginning on May 13 and end on September 30, 2013 when the authority for CRP is set to expire. The Conservation Reserve Program and CREP protect natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP/CREP across the nation. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource conserving covers. In addition, participants receive technical assistance and an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 10-15 years.

The Hawaii CREP/CRP goals are to provide significant environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat, water quality, reduced erosion and air quality. Working to meet state environmental objectives and to protect environmentally sensitive land in Hawaii, Hawaii CREP seeks to enhance wildlife habitat and control invasive species, as well as improve water quality and quantity, increase groundwater recharge, improve near shore coral reef health and diversity by filtering agricultural runoff and increasing water condensation in critical groundwater recharge zones. Hawaii CREP will aid in creating forest buffer corridors and expanding critical habitat for many threatened, endangered, and rare species of Hawaii.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, call your local FSA service center for an appointment or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Additional information on Hawaii CREP can be found at [www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw/forestry/crep](http://www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw/forestry/crep).

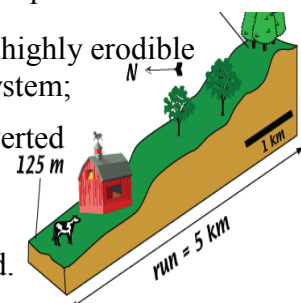


## Conservation Compliance (Highly Erodible Land and Wetland)

Producers participating in Farm Service Agency (FSA) programs must comply with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation requirements. Highly erodible land (HEL) contains soil which is susceptible to excessive erosion rates. A wetland is land containing 'wet soils' or is saturated by surface or groundwater which supports growth of water tolerant vegetation.

To maintain eligibility for assistance producers must not:

- ◆ Farm annually tilled crops on highly erodible land without a conservation system;
- ◆ Farm on land which was converted from a wetland after December 23, 1985; and
- ◆ Convert a wetland to farmland.



Technical determinations of highly erodible land and wetland are completed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Participants who violate HEL or wetland conservation compliance provisions are ineligible for FSA benefits for the year(s) in violation. If a producer received program benefits and is later found to be non-compliant, they would be required to refund all payments received and may be assessed liquidated damages.

Producers must notify FSA and update Form AD-1026 if conducting any activity which would affect their compliance with HEL and wetland conservation provisions. These activities include:

- ◆ Acquisition of new farmland with no previous HEL and/or wetland determinations;
- ◆ Removal of fence rows or any practices within the farm's conservation system;
- ◆ Conversion of land to farmland;
- ◆ Changing of crop fields such as combining fields or dividing fields;
- ◆ Installation, removal, or any modification to a drainage system; and
- ◆ Other activity which may alter highly erodible lands or wetlands.

If you have questions regarding Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation requirements, contact your local FSA office or visit: [www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/Highlyerodibleland\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/Highlyerodibleland_factsheet.pdf).





## Guaranteed Loan Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan limit for the Guaranteed Loan Program has increased to \$1,302,000. The limit is adjusted annually based on producer cost data compiled by the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

As a reminder, the one-time loan origination fee charged on FSA guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans is 1.5 percent of the 90-percent guaranteed portion of the loan.

## Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H Clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

For more information you can call your FSA county office. Our staff can help with preparing and processing the application forms

## Beginning & Limited Resource Farmers

Farm Service Agency (FSA) assists beginning farmers by providing credit to eligible applicants through its direct and guaranteed loan programs. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years;
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm;
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA;
- Does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's median size, which is generally 3-4 acres in Hawaii, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available at your local USDA Service Center. You may also visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

## Little Red Hen is a Big Hit with Kauai 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

We all know the childhood ditty, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, in which Mary brings her lamb to school, but did you know that on the island of Kauai, Mary Pigao is known to bring her egg-laying, Rhode Island Red to many a school outing?

A Program Technician with the Kauai County Farm Service Agency (FSA), Mary enjoys interacting with children and knows how to capture their attention and engage them; hence, Mary and her little red hen were in attendance at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Ag & Environmental Awareness Day, along with over 300 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, who traveled to Wailua from schools across the island.



Sponsored by the Kauai County Farm Bureau and the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the event exposed students to issues in the agricultural sector and the environment, including career opportunities. Educational lectures and exhibits included the art of cultivating taro and bananas, combating and controlling invasive species, plant propagation, an agriculture biotechnology timeline, livestock for life, agriculture to energy, and buzzing about bees.

Mary spent the day speaking with students about FSA's Rural Youth Loan Program. She employed photos to help tell the story of older students who have successfully utilized the program. She explained what can be purchased with the money from a loan; how the use of credit educates young entrepreneurs; and how FSA can help young borrowers to be successful in today's marketplace.

Kauai is known as the Garden Island and for its mokihana berry, maile lei, taro and thousands of wild chickens. With some inspiration from the little red hen, the students began to relate their own animated chicken stories. The smiling faces were a delight to see and the stories told were priceless.

# 2012 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

## USDA Announces Final Call for 2012 Census of Agriculture

With the window to respond to the 2012 Census of Agriculture officially closing on May 31, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is urging farmers and ranchers not to miss this opportunity to be counted and help determine the future of farming in America. USDA has already received more than 2 million completed Census forms.

The Census of Agriculture, conducted only once every five years, is the only source of consistent and comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation. It looks at farms, value of land, market value of agricultural production, farm practices, expenditures, and other factors that affect the way farmers and ranchers do business. The information is used by agribusinesses, town planners, local governments, and policy makers, as well as farmers, ranchers, growers and others to shape farm programs, boost rural services and grow the future of farming.

The 2012 Census will provide a complete picture of agriculture that will be used to shape the future of agriculture, rural America, and the lives of those USDA serves for years to come. The deadline to respond to the Census of Agriculture is May 31. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) may contact producers by phone or in person to collect Census information since time is running out.

Farmers and ranchers can also return their forms by mail or online by visiting a secure website, [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov). Federal law requires a response from everyone who receives the Census form and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

For more information about the Census, including helpful tips on completing your Census form, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) or call 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828). The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

## Dates to Remember

May 20, 2013	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup starts
May 27, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Kauai County
May 31, 2013	Deadline for acreage reports for 2013 Nursery
June 7, 2013	2011 SURE application deadline
June 14, 2013	General Signup for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ends
June 17, 2013	COC nomination period opens
July 10, 2013	Oahu—Financing Your Farm Workshop Register at: <a href="http://hsbdcn.ecenterdirect.com/Conferences.action">http://hsbdcn.ecenterdirect.com/Conferences.action</a> (FSA Presentation)
September 9, 2013	Deadline to apply for emergency loans due to drought in Hawaii and Maui Counties
Ongoing	Hawaii CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) sign-up

## Farm Loan Programs Interest Rates for May 2013

<b>Farm Operating - Direct</b>	<b>1.375%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct</b>	<b>3.50%</b>
<b>Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher</b>	<b>1.50%</b>
<b>Emergency</b>	<b>2.375%</b>
<b>Limited Resource</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Microloan</b>	<b>1.250%</b>

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